March 29, 2002 Meeting Notes

Advisory Committee for Facilitating Data Sharing

Attendees:

Steve Schafer, Chair	CIO – DAS	slschafe@notes.state.ne.us
Gayle Starr	Nebr. Dept. of Natural Resources	gstarr@dnr.state.ne.us
Tom Lamberson	Nebr. Dept. of Envir. Quality	Tom.Lamberson@ndeq.state.ne.us
Mark Kuzila	Cons. and Survey Div.-UNL	mkuzila1@unl.edu
Dan Hiller	Nebr. Emer. Mgmt. Agency	dan.hiller@nema.state.ne.us
Jason L. Berlowitz	Nebr. Emer. Mgmt. Agency	jason.berlowitz@nema.state.ne.us
Dave Hattan	IMServices – DAS	dhattan@notes.state.ne.us
Tracy Bicknell-Holmes	UNL – Library Services	tbicknel@unlnotes.unl.edu
Ryan Axman	Lower Platte North NRD	raxmann@lpnnrd.org
Mike Thompson	Nebr. Dept. of Natural Resources	mthompson@dnr.state.ne.us
Kim Menke	Nebr. Dept. of Natural Resources	kmenke@dnr.state.ne.us
Larry Zink	GIS Steering Committee	lzink@notes.state.ne.us

Review of Minutes of the Previous Meeting. Larry reviewed the minutes from the last meeting, which included representatives of 14 agencies and affirmed Steve Schafer as Adv. Cmte. Chair. Larry noted that those present at that meeting strongly affirmed the need for an enhanced state clearinghouse/data access and support center. The committee also decided it was not practical to discuss the issue of a clearinghouse separate from a data access and support center, because the two were very interconnected and more of a continuum. The previous discussion also noted that whatever structure of developed needed to have a high degree of flexibility, such as storing some spatial data on the center's servers and for some data access would just be provided via links. Other issues and considerations raised included: NEMA's experience; interpretation of data, access in times of crisis; and legal issues. The committee adopted to action items to be pursued for the next meeting: a) a survey of other state's approaches; and b a draft spatial data survey).

Review of Other States Approaches. Larry reported on the limited survey he had conducted of how others state approach meeting these data sharing needs. Larry provided a handout overview of the following eight states: Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Texas, Vermont, and Washington. He noted a considerable variety in terms of approach, level of service, organizational approach, and resources dedicated. However, he indicated that he felt there were some good models to learn form. In addition to the wide variety of services and institutional arrangements, Larry also noted that several of the states meet this need through some type of hybrid relationship between state agencies and universities. All data service centers had some defined relationship with their state GIS coordinating council. There was also a fairly apparent relationship between the resources available and the services provided. Most of those states with limited services indicated and desire to provide more services if the resources were available. Another commonality from most of the respondents was an interest in or plans to move towards providing increased services in the area of Interactive Internet Mapping.

Survey of Current Geospatial Data Holdings and Needs. Larry provided the draft of a possible survey of agencies' current spatial data holdings:

- Database title
- Data theme (transportation, aerial imagery, elevation, cadastral, hydrography, street address, administrative boundaries, geodetic control, other)
- Brief description of data
- Brief description of data source
- Appropriate map scale/accuracy
- Geographic extent/area (statewide, county, city, quads, watersheds, etc)

Currentness
Availability (online, offline, fees, licensed, restricted availability)
Metadata available? (yes/no)
Reporting entity or agency
Contact person, phone, email

Following discussions Tom Lamberson offered the outline of a simplier survey, which he felt would get more response.

Agency/Entity
Contact information
Do you have databases w/ locational information (Y/N)
Are they "candidates" for a clearinghouse (general public or restricted access)
List or short narrative describing
Narrative of spatial data needs

There was a general feeling among the advisory committee members that the shorter/simpler survey was the better way to proceed. There was a further discussion about how to distribute the survey, with a general agreement to distribute the survey very widely. In addition to state agencies, it was suggested that we work with Tracy to distribute the survey through higher education; Larry Dix – NACO; and Lash Chaffin – League.

Define and Prioritize Potential Functions of a Clearinghouse / Data Access and Support Center. To open this discussion, Larry referred back to the resolution based by the Advisory Committee on Interactive Internet Mapping, which he said attempted to lay out the range of possible services. Tom Lamberson suggested an alternative perspective on this listing by adding some broader groups of suggested services and added a couple more.

Potential role(s) of a Nebraska spatial data access and support center: *(a range of related service options, some of which could be initially incorporated into such a center, others potentially developed later as policy makers deem appropriate and resources become available, and some possibly not at all)*

Tom L's suggestions	**Interactive Internet Mapping Adv. Cmte. Resolution Suggested Services**
Catalog +	a. Maintain a central geospatial clearinghouse with catalog search engines to identify the wide range of Nebraska-related geospatial data that is currently available, standardized documentation on the specific databases, and information on how the data might be accessed. b. Maintain a central repository and online access point for a broad cross-section of Nebraska-related geospatial databases, either by direct download, links through interactive Internet map server technology, or a variety of offline digital transfer media. c. Provide users with a single contact point to obtain the most recent versions of a variety of dynamic geospatial databases and the agencies responsible for maintaining these dynamic geospatial databases with a single point of contact with these data users.
Help Desk	d. Provide users with a single contact point to obtain the most recent versions of a variety of dynamic geospatial databases and the agencies responsible for maintaining these dynamic geospatial databases with a single point of contact with these data users.
Internet Mapping	e. Provide agencies wishing to develop and maintain their own internal Internet

	mapping capabilities with a convenient one-stop online interactive access point for widely-used (particularly large and/or dynamic) data files, to allow them to access these files through their internet map services, without requiring them to maintain separate copies of these large and/or dynamic files on their internal agency servers. f. Provide a variety of state and local agencies with capability of distributing information using interactive Internet mapping service technologies without the necessity of acquiring the specialized hardware and software, and developing and maintaining the specialized technical expertise. g. ~~Offer the potential of a one-stop GIS portal for accessing state data via Internet mapping services~~. (Suggested rewording: Provide technical expertise and special services to state and local agencies desiring applications with a GIS interface)
Technical Assistance	h. Assist a variety of agencies to explore the potential of, and develop and maintain a range of interactive Internet mapping applications in support of their agency missions by providing a convenient and knowledge service center. i. Provide state and local public agencies with outreach and education related to GIS implementation j. Serve as a GIS consultant (suggested addition by Tom L.)
Suggested additional service to be listed	k. Spatial data development

Evaluate options for hosting the clearinghouse / data access and support center. Steve Schafer opened the discussion of where and how such a data support center might be hosted by inviting suggestions and proposals from committee members. Steve suggested we not only needed to consider where, but also how such a center should be structured and what its governance relationship should be to coordinating entities such as the GIS Steering Committee and the NITC. Steve noted the observed pattern in other states of data support center that involve a hybrid of state agencies and universities. He also noted that several possibilities had been raised for hosting such a center, including: NDNR, CSD, and the university libraries.

Gale Starr indicated that in many ways the Dept. of Natural Resources felt that they were perhaps the logical choice for hosting such a center, and that it had been discussed within the agency. He indicated that in general NDNR was open to the possibility, but that issues related to the level services desired and funding would certainly need to be addressed.

Tom Lamberson indicated that in general he also has felt that NDNR was the logical choice for hosting such a data support center. However, Tom indicated that some recent events had raised some concerns in his mind about the potential problems of housing such a center (with an enterprise focus) inside of an agency which may at times have different priorities. The recent example of the relationship between the Environmental Trust and the Game and Parks Commission was discussed as an illustration of this concern. A brief discussion followed about possible structures that might serve to help buffer such an enterprise focused center from the swings of its host agency.

This discussion of governance led to a discussion of the NDNR Databank and its Technical Advisory Board. The high degree of overlap between the Databank Technical Advisory Board and the GIS Steering Committee was noted. Gayle indicated that NDNR has struggled with the role of the Databank

Advisory Board and agreed that there was a need for a significant review of that relationship, with legislative direction.

The following discussion explored a wide range of possible structures, locations, and opportunities that might be explored in considering the development of such a spatial data center. Among the ideas proposed for consideration were the following.

Dan Hiller raised the idea of working with the Dept. of Roads and the Joint Operations Center that is being developed with NDOR, the State Patrol and NEMA.

Mark Kuzila expressed a willingness on CSD's part to support a hybrid state agency/university effort, if that was the will of the group.

Tom Lamberson asked Mark about the existence of university models (centers) for this sort of thing.

Steve Schafer indicated that we should explore the possible synergies between agencies and institutions. The idea of creating a "Joint Public Entity", similar to an interlocal agreement was raised as a possibility.

Dave Hattan was asked about what IMServices might bring to such an effort. Dave indicated that state statutes allow IMServices to work with state and local agencies, there might be a question relative to private entities. Dave indicated that there was need to be revenue to support such an effort and he also mentioned the general overhead on fees or the AS400 maintenance fees.

Tom Lamberson and Dave Hattan also mentioned the positive collaboration between IMServices and DEQ on Notes.

Jason and Dan Hiller talked about what NEMA would gain from the availability of centralized technical support.

Tom Lamberson shared that EPA had grant available to help create systems to distribute environmental data, and that maybe the clearinghouse / data support center could be a means to accomplish this distribution.

Given the lateness of the hour, the meeting was adjourned with a commitment to meet again on Friday, May 3rd, 9:00 AM in the NDNR conference room to continue the discussion.